



21 | 22 SEASON SPONSOR: BMO 

THE QUEEN IN ME



SPRING 2022 HOUSE PROGRAM
CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY THEATRE



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before watching *The Queen in Me*, we invite you to experience the Canadian Opera Company's 2022 land acknowledgement ***where the water meets the land*** by watching **this video**.

This artwork was created by Rebecca Cuddy and Julie Mclsaac, as inaugural participants in the COC's new **Land Acknowledgement Commissioning Program**.

Visit **coc.ca/land-acknowledgement** for more information.

Detail from ***where the water meets the land*** by Rebecca Cuddy and Julie Mclsaac



WELCOME TO THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY THEATRE

Welcome to the Canadian Opera Company Theatre (COCT), part of a set of interconnected buildings at the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre that houses our administrative offices, rehearsal facilities, and many elements of our production and creative work, including wig and costume shops, and the props department. During the pandemic shutdown, we took the opportunity to refurbish our exterior signage and are now re-activating the COCT as a venue for bold and boundary-breaking work.

This is part of our commitment to opera of all scales, a key element in General Director Perryn Leech's plans for the creative revitalization at the COC. The COCT space is unique in downtown Toronto—it regularly houses two full-sized opera sets during rehearsals—and is characterized by flexibility that can accommodate a wide variety of production needs.

What this means is we now have a dedicated theatrical space for the presentation of works situated beyond, but in complement to, our core season programming. We are excited about sharing work here that is often new, contemporary, and original, and which opens up space for new voices, those unheard or traditionally underrepresented in the opera canon.

After two long years, the moment we've looked forward to is here. All of us at the COC are overjoyed to be back at work doing what we love: creating live opera that showcases the incredible artistic talent in this community and connects audiences to art.

For all Canadian Opera Company performances this spring, masks are mandatory for all patrons unless actively eating or drinking.

THE QUEEN IN ME

Featuring music from *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Manon Lescaut*, and *Turandot* (by Puccini); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (by Donizetti); *Macbeth* and *Rigoletto* (by Verdi); *Salome* (by R. Strauss); *Esclarmonde* (by Massenet); and *The Magic Flute* (by Mozart)

JUNE 2, 3, 4, 2022

Sung in Italian, French, and German

Orchestral arrangements by Ondrej Golias, Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser and Teiya Kasahara

THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Creator/Performer

Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野 ^

Lighting Designer

André du Toit[°]

Conductor

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser[°]

Projection Designer

Laura Warren[°]

Co-directors

Andrea Donaldson[°]

Aria Umezawa[°]

Stage Manager

Jane Honek

Set & Costume Designer

Joanna Yu[°]

Performance time is approximately one hour with no intermission.

[°]COC mainstage debut ^Graduate of COC Ensemble Studio

Program information is correct at time of printing. All casting is subject to change.

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ABOUT AMPLIFIED OPERA

Amplified Opera is a new collective based in Toronto that aims to make the case for opera's continued existence and relevance within the modern world. Officially launched in 2019, the company's core values are rooted in 'five Cs' that govern its mission and artistic practices: conversation, community, creativity, curiosity, and compassion. Amplified Opera is dedicated to rethinking common creative practices in the art form, deepening opera's relationships with its communities, and forging meaningful paths forward for the entire performing arts sector. The company is passionate about commissioning new works, as well as reframing older opera, and championing diverse perspectives as the necessary building blocks for a sustainable, and more inclusive, art form. Amplified Opera was co-founded by Aria Umezawa, Asitha Tennekoon, Marion Newman, and Teiya Kasahara. For more information, visit amplifiedopera.com.

ABOUT THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. General Director Perryn Leech joined the company in 2021, forming a leadership team with Music Director Johannes Debus and Deputy General Director Christie Darville. The COC enjoys a loyal audience, including a dedicated base of subscribers, and has an international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation. Its diverse repertoire includes new commissions and productions, local and international collaborations with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracts the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The company is an incubator for the future of the art form, nurturing Canada's new wave of opera performers and creators with customized training and support. The COC's purpose-built opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, is hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. For more information, visit coc.ca.

ABOUT NIGHTWOOD THEATRE

As Canada's foremost feminist theatre, Nightwood Theatre is driven by artistic excellence, advocacy, and the successful training and development of artists that self-identify as having lived experience touched by womanhood—this includes but is not limited to trans, cis, Two-Spirit, and non-binary folks. Founded in 1979, Nightwood Theatre has created and produced award-winning plays, which have won Dora Mavor Moore, Chalmers, Trillium, and Governor General's awards. To learn more about Nightwood Theatre, please visit nightwoodtheatre.net.

ABOUT THEATRE GARGANTUA

Theatre Gargantua is one of Canada's leading multi-disciplinary theatre companies. Under the direction of founding Artistic Director Jacquie P.A. Thomas, the company has been devising dynamic physical theatre for 30 years. Gargantua is committed to the creation of original, compelling, relevant work that engages multiple senses, and we strive to inspire and challenge our audience to see their world in new ways. Our productions explore socially relevant themes through bold theatricality that expertly blends provocative text, dynamic choreography, live vocal compositions, and media into our signature style. Our work, developed in a unique two-year cycle, has given Gargantua a distinct place within Canada's theatre ecology, and has garnered dozens of nominations, awards and recognitions for our outstanding work, which has toured nationally and internationally. To learn more about Theatre Gargantua, please visit theatregargantua.ca.

CREATOR'S NOTE

2016 was a bad year for me. I had just come out of a depression and was considering leaving the opera industry and singing entirely. I had been struggling with being an opera singer in the industry for some time. Struggling with trying to fit in, trying to be what the industry deemed as hireable and successful. But every time I tried to project that image—that persona—I felt like I was losing a part of myself in the process. I didn't know how to cope anymore, let alone survive as the queer, mixed-race singer I was/am. I was literally putting on a mask everyday and not knowing who would be left underneath when I went home at night. I realized it was time to ask myself some hard questions: Why was I giving so much power to a job that demanded me to change the very nature and fabric of who I was? And what did it say about me that I was willing to put up with this industry's long outdated beliefs? I didn't know much then, but I did know I couldn't simply leave opera behind and walk away. Opera was and remains my lifeforce and my greatest gift. I would have to work for change from within. I would also have to go back to the beginning and rediscover when I fell in love with this vocation in the first place. That's where I re-met the Queen of the Night.

Over my career I have performed the Queen of the Night in fourteen different iterations of *The Magic Flute*, each one seeing the famous character as an evil, fallen woman, and an obstacle who needed to be removed in order for the two young lovers to get their happy ending. Creating my own version of the Queen of the Night character, who served as the inspiration of *The Queen In Me* in early 2017, became my safe space and playground, while the Queen herself became my solace and my advocate. She inspired me to disrupt the world around me, she gave me the platform to speak and sing my truth, and by continuing to develop this solo piece, I started to not only say enough was enough, but I began singing in ways and through works I had never dreamed possible.

It has been a long road. We were supposed to premiere this work in September 2020, but COVID-19 had other plans. However, I'm glad the premiere was delayed until June 2022. While this great pivot took away a lot, it also gave me time

to become myself, the real person I was holding back all of these years in the opera industry. And the journey continues to be a winding one. I came out as trans non-binary during this time to myself, to my partner, family, friends, and close colleagues, and with their support I've been able to say to the world, this is me. So much of my identity is wrapped up in my voice, a voice that is high—a soprano—and characterized as feminine to the ear, which cascades into the outside world assuming the rest of me is gendered feminine also. And that is okay. Sometimes. But for me, that is not me, as I am learning and unlearning from my past experiences. My voice is a beautiful and loving part of who I am. And my voice can also be trans, just like my body, mind and heart, with or without medical interventions. I don't regret for a second being assigned female at birth and being socialized as a girl and a young woman. My experiences in womanhood make me the person I am today, make me whole—trans and ever-evolving—and make it possible for me to dream and live my gender and ethnicity through not only a fierce and feminine character like the Queen, but also beyond, both on and off the stage.

Working with Andrea Donaldson as dramaturg and director, co-founding Amplified Opera with Aria Umezawa, Asitha Tennekoon, and Marion Newman, and building my community of dear colleagues, has enabled me to probe further artistically and to honour my full self as I continue these healing and learning journeys with compassion and gentleness. What the mask of the Queen of the Night affords me now is so much more than I could have ever initially imagined. She is a celebration of my past self, of the freedom and unbridled joy I always wanted to feel as a closeted, scared, young singer. She is my cheerleader helping me to redefine what it means to be a soprano in the opera industry. And she is my companion and confidante as I continue to venture into this career of making art, of making space, and celebrating my community. Now, I can finally say that the they/them/theirs of me and my voice are here to stay, welcoming continual disruption of my own perception of what gender is and can be, and of what it means to be a soprano.

Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野 (they/them)
May 2022

DIRECTORS' NOTE

Andy Warhol understood the power and pitfalls of repeating an image when he remarked “the more you look at the exact same thing... the better and emptier you feel.” He was referring to the nature of pop culture—observing that cultural understanding is cemented through repetition and noting the emotional attachment we have towards stories and images that are familiar to us. The nuance of Warhol’s art is in how it highlights the tension between an image becoming iconic the more frequently it is seen, while simultaneously losing its meaning.

Enter the Queen of the Night: an iconic character who sings an iconic aria that has been repeated for centuries. She is bombastic, charismatic, and tonight she is ‘a little pissed.’ She loves opera and her audience, but has reached a boiling point—she cannot bear to perpetuate the racism, misogyny, and various abuses on and offstage for herself and her other fellow fallen women characters. So tonight, she halts the opera.

This iteration of the Queen of the Night is born from coloratura soprano Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野 (pronouns they/they) experience as a queer trans non-binary multi-racial person who has spent years trying to fit into the rigid roles that their voice type demanded. Their identity and their passion for opera have been at painful odds, which spurred the creation of this piece. In crafting this work, Teiya has given up their anonymity, standing up to an entire industry. A central tension in *The Queen in Me* is that The Queen—and truly the creator,

Teiya—loves the very music that prevents them from expressing themselves authentically as their full self.

Whistleblowers are dangerous and vital. The COC has had the bravery to invite a cultural troublemaker (and their entourage of partner organizations) into their space—disruptors who are railing against opera’s systems and traditions, gesturing toward a new era that asks what we might gain by looking even more critically at the works we consume. In this time of decolonization, truth, and reconciliation, settler culture is experiencing a painful loss of innocence. Through confronting truths and gaining insight into how we are impacted by the world around us, we can challenge the stories that bring us comfort, but that have proven to leave us empty.

If Warhol is right, and engaging in repetition makes us feel good and empty, then we might theorize that breaking from repetition makes us feel uncomfortable and full. What makes *The Queen In Me* so vital is how Teiya Kasahara demonstrates that by resisting the inertia which compels us to tell the same stories in the same ways, and by challenging ourselves to search for new meaning, we can emerge from the process feeling proud and empowered to live as our full selves.

We hope you enjoy the show!

Andrea Donaldson and Aria Umezawa
Co-Directors

Watch Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野
in the “Making *The Queen in Me*” video [HERE](#).

BIOGRAPHIES



DANIEL BARTHOLOMEW-POYSER (he/him), Conductor (Calgary, AB)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: *Blue* (Washington National Opera); Engagements with Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, Regina Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Nova Scotia, San Francisco Symphony, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Link-Up Orchestra. UPCOMING: Kennedy Centre Summer Music Institute, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Windsor Symphony Orchestra



ANDREA DONALDSON (she/they), Co-Director (Toronto, ON)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: *Every Day She Rose, Grace, Lo (or Dear Mr. Wells)*, *Quiver* (Nightwood Theatre); *Betrayal* (Soulpepper Theatre Company); *Beautiful Man* (Factory Theatre); *A Beautiful View* (Festival Players); *Sequence, Soliciting Temptation, Within the Glass* (Tarragon Theatre); *Romeo & Juliet* (Shakespeare in the Ruff); *Mistatim* (Red Sky Performance); *Montparnasse* (Theatre Passe Muraille). UPCOMING: *The Queen In Me* (Belfast International Arts Festival)
ADDITIONAL CREDITS: Current Artistic Director at Nightwood Theatre



ANDRÉ DU TOIT (he/him), Lighting Designer (Toronto, ON)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: *Prince Hamlet* (Why Not Theatre); *R+J* (Stratford Festival); *This Was The World, Harlem Duet, Guarded Girls* (Tarragon Theatre); *Getting Married, The Orchard* (Shaw Festival); *The Rocky Horror Show* (Hart House Theatre); *Italian Mime Suicide, Paolozzopedia* (Bad New Days); *Now You See Her* (Nightwood Theatre, Quote Unquote, Why Not Theatre); *on air* (adelheid); *Quiver* (Nightwood Theatre). UPCOMING: *What You Won't Do For Love* (Why Not Theatre, Luminato); *The Cave* (JMar Electric, Luminato)



JANE HONEK (they/she), Stage Manager (Toronto, ON)
COC CREDITS: (as Production Assistant) *Falstaff, Don Giovanni, The Barber of Seville, Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung*. RECENT: (as Stage Manager) *The Queen In Me, Amplify 2019* (Amplified Opera); *Pomegranate* (Pomegranate Opera); *The Angel Speaks* (Opera Atelier); *L'Histoire Du Soldat* (Loose Tea Theatre); (as Assistant Stage Manager) *Don Giovanni, Idomeneo, The Marriage of Figaro* (Opera Atelier); *Come From Away* (Mirvish Productions); *STARS: Together, The Wedding Party* (Crow's Theatre); *An Ideal Husband* (Stratford Festival)



TEIYA KASAHARA 笠原 貞野 (they/them), Creator/Performer (Toronto, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: 2 Poems by Constantin Balmont, *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (Brooklyn Academy of Music Tour); *Echo, Ariadne auf Naxos* (2011); *Frasquita, Carmen* (2010). RECENT: Soloist, Beethoven's 9th Symphony (Vancouver Symphony Orchestra); *Cio-Cio San, Madama Butterfly* (Windsor Symphony Orchestra). UPCOMING: Creator/Performer, *Little Mis(s)gender* (Queer & Trans Research Lab Mark S. Bonham Centre For Sexual Diversity Studies, University Of Toronto & Queer AF Collective); Priestess/Bartender, *Pomegranate* (COC)



STEPHANIE MARRS (she/her), Assistant Stage Manager (Toronto, ON)
COC CREDITS: (as Stage Manager) *The Magic Flute, Madama Butterfly* (2022); *In Winter, Mozart's Requiem, In Concert* (2021); *The Barber of Seville* (2020); *Elektra* (2019); *Hadrian, Anna Bolena, The Abduction from the Seraglio* (2018); *The Magic Flute, Louis Riel* (2017); *Ariodante, Carmen* (2016); *La Traviata* (2015); *Madama Butterfly* (2003, 2009, 2014); *Hercules, La Bohème* (2013); RECENT: *Musik für das Ende* (Soundstreams); *Louis Riel* (National Arts Centre, Opéra de Québec); *The Magic Flute* (Opéra de Québec)



ARIA UMEZAWA (she/her), Co-Director (Toronto, ON)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: *SF Opera Lab Pop-Up: Battle of the Divas, SF Opera Lab Pop-Up: Operatronica, SF Opera Lab Pop-Up: Oakland Edition!* (San Francisco Opera Lab); *Schwabacher Summer Concert, Merola 60th Anniversary Gala, Merola Grand Finale* (Merola Opera Program); *Christmas with SOL3 MIO* (San Francisco Opera); *Ariodante* (Opera McGill); *Hamlet* (West Edge Opera); *Die Fledermaus, In Pace Requiescat* (Opera 5). UPCOMING: *The Raven* (Opera Philadelphia); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Vancouver Opera); *Madama Butterfly* (New Orleans Opera); *Turandot* (Opera Colorado)

2022 2023

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CARMEN
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MOZART

SALOME
R. STRAUSS

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LAURA WARREN, Projection Designer (Toronto, ON)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: (as Projection Designer) *Is God Is* (Canadian Stage, Obsidian Theatre, Necessary Angel); *21 Black Futures* (Obsidian Theatre, CBC Arts); *Sexual Misconduct of the Middle Classes* (Tarragon Theatre); *In Absentia* (JDdance); *Pomegranate* (Pomegranate Opera); *The Black Drum* (Deaf Culture Centre, Soulpepper Theatre Company); *Grace* (Nightwood Theatre, Crow's Theatre); *Unholy* (Nightwood Theatre); *Oratorio: A Theatrical Mixtape* (Obsidian Theatre); *Bearing* (Signal Theatre, Luminato); *Frescobaldi and the Glories of Rome, Illuminations, A Medieval Christmas* (Toronto Consort)



JOANNA YU (she/her), Set & Costume Designer (Stratford, ON)
RECENT: (as Set and Costume Designer) *among men, acts of Faith* (Factory Theatre); *How to Fail as a Popstar* (Canadian Stage); *Rope* (Shaw Festival); *Comedy of Errors, The Aeneid* (Stratford Festival); *Yaga* (Tarragon Theatre); (as Costume Designer) *R.U.R a torrent of Light* (Tapestry Opera); *School Girls, or the African Mean Girls Play* (Obsidian Theatre Company, Nightwood Theatre); *Lilies* (Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, lemonTree creations)
UPCOMING: *1939* (Stratford Festival)

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

Marie Bérard, *Concertmaster*
The Concertmaster's chair has been endowed in perpetuity by Joey and Toby Tanenbaum
Aaron Schwebel, *Associate Concertmaster*

VIOLIN II

Paul Zevenhuizen, *Principal*
Csaba Koczó, *Assistant Principal*

VIOLA

Joshua Greenlaw, *Assistant Principal, Acting Principal*
Sheila Jaffé, *Acting Assistant Principal*

CELLO

Leana Rutt, *Principal*

BASS

Tony Flynt, *Principal*

FLUTE

Douglas Stewart, *Principal*

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Mark Rogers, *Principal*

CLARINET

Dominic Desautels, *Principal*
(leave of absence)
Colleen Cook, *Acting Principal*

BASSOON

Eric Hall, *Principal*

HORN

Scott Wevers, *Principal*

TRUMPET

Robert Weymouth, *Principal*
(leave of absence)
James Gardiner, *Acting Principal*

TROMBONE

Charles Benaroya, *Principal*
(leave of absence)
Nate Fanning, *Acting Principal*

PERCUSSION

Nicholas Stoup, *Principal*

HARP

Sarah Davidson, *Principal*

PIANO

David Eliakis*

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Ondrej Golias

PERSONNEL MANAGER

Ian Cowie

*extra musician

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ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Sarah Mansikka

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Stephanie Marrs

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Geoff Hughes, creator of original prototype dress
Shanna Miller and Young People's Theatre
Chris Carlton, Zoë Carpenter and TO Live
Bella Szpala, Production Assistant, Theatre Gargantua
Sadie Epstein-Fine



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Images By Michael Cooper

AMPLIFIED OPERA

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Technical Operations*
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Head Scenic Artist, The Queen in Me
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Industry Costumes
Marjory Fielding



CHILDREN OF FIRE

NightwoodTheatre ●●●●●

CHILDREN OF FIRE

WORLD PREMIERE

A **Nightwood Theatre** Production with support from **Aluna Theatre**

Written and created by **Shahrzad Arshadi** and **Anna Chatterton**

Verbatim text translated by **Shahrzad Arshadi**

Directed by **Beatriz Pizano**

June 27 to July 2, 2022

Prairie Drive Park

Children of Fire is an intimate portrayal of the Kurdish female freedom fighters that hosted Shahrzad Arshadi and Anna Chatterton in the mountains of Kurdistan in 2018. Co-created with a mix of verbatim theatre and first-person confessional, this play follows the journey and layered relationship across cultures between Shahrzad and Anna, and asks what is at the heart of living bravely as a woman and an activist.

For more information please visit **nightwoodtheatre.net**.

Photo of Kurdish Freedom Fighters, 2015, by Shahrzad Arshadi

Wig & Make-up Supervisor
Sharon Ryman

Head of Wig & Make-up Crew
Cori Ferguson

SURTITLES™ Writer
Gunta Dreifelds

SURTITLES™ Assistants
Olwyn Lewis
Aislinn Ritchie

Supernumeraries Coordinators
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The COC's Community Partnerships & Programs team is excited to offer a number of creative programs that connect children, youth, and young adults with meaningful experiential learning and professional development opportunities this summer.

COC SUMMER OPERA CAMPS

Summer Opera Camps invite young creatives entering grades one through 12 to learn about singing, composition, drama, and set design, through the making of an original opera. Our one-week programs culminate in a final showcase held on the last day for family and friends. No previous experience with opera is required to participate.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

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FREE CONCERT SERIES IN THE RICHARD BRADSHAW AMPHITHEATRE

PRESENTED BY



THE
READY
COMMITMENT

“[The Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts] has a grace and is the antidote to architecture as showmanship. The Free Concert Series—from music inspired by the diaries of Virginia Woolf to brilliant Cree artist, Tomson Highway—makes it one of the most accessible venues in the city.”

— Claudia Dey, *Vogue*

We are thrilled to announce that the Free Concert Series will be returning to the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre for the upcoming 2022/2023 season. A performing arts staple in Toronto, the Free Concert Series will once again create accessible opportunities to hear exceptional performances from some of the best creators in music and dance.

Starting this Fall, concerts will highlight a wide range of disciplines and genres from local, national, and international performers. As the series returns to our light-filled amphitheatre in the centre of the city, we welcome the chance to rebuild connections with one another, and celebrate the resilience of the arts.

To view our recent digital performance series, City Sessions, or to stay up to date with upcoming concerts, visit

coc.ca/FreeConcerts



Steven Taetz Quartet, 2018

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The Canadian Opera Company would like to thank all those who volunteer both on a daily basis and for special events with the company.

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Musical excerpts provided
by Universal Classics



The COC is a member of Opera America, Opera.ca, and TAPA.

The COC operates in agreement with Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

The COC operates in agreement with IATSE Local #58, Local #822, Local #828.

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The Life Trustees Council salutes the leaders of the COC community whose efforts have been integral to the company's artistic evolution and transformative history of accomplishment.

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The COC offers its sincere thanks to the individuals listed below for their extraordinary support.

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Building a community of world-class artists, both established and emerging.

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The Encore Legacy is the planned giving program of the Canadian Opera Company.

Planned giving is making the decision today to provide a gift for the Canadian Opera Company that may not be realized until after your lifetime.

Gifts planned today, that will ultimately affect your estate, allow you to make a statement of support that will become a lasting legacy to the COC.

The Canadian Opera Company gratefully acknowledges and thanks the following individuals who have included the COC in their estate planning:

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The Monumental Campaign recognizes the leadership of our philanthropic community in supporting the COC's first-ever production of Wagner's Parsifal. This long-anticipated project has been postponed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it will be brought to the stage at the earliest opportunity. In acknowledging the commitment of this donor community, the COC is proud to celebrate their direct and positive impact on our ongoing return to the stage during this 2021/2022 season.

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